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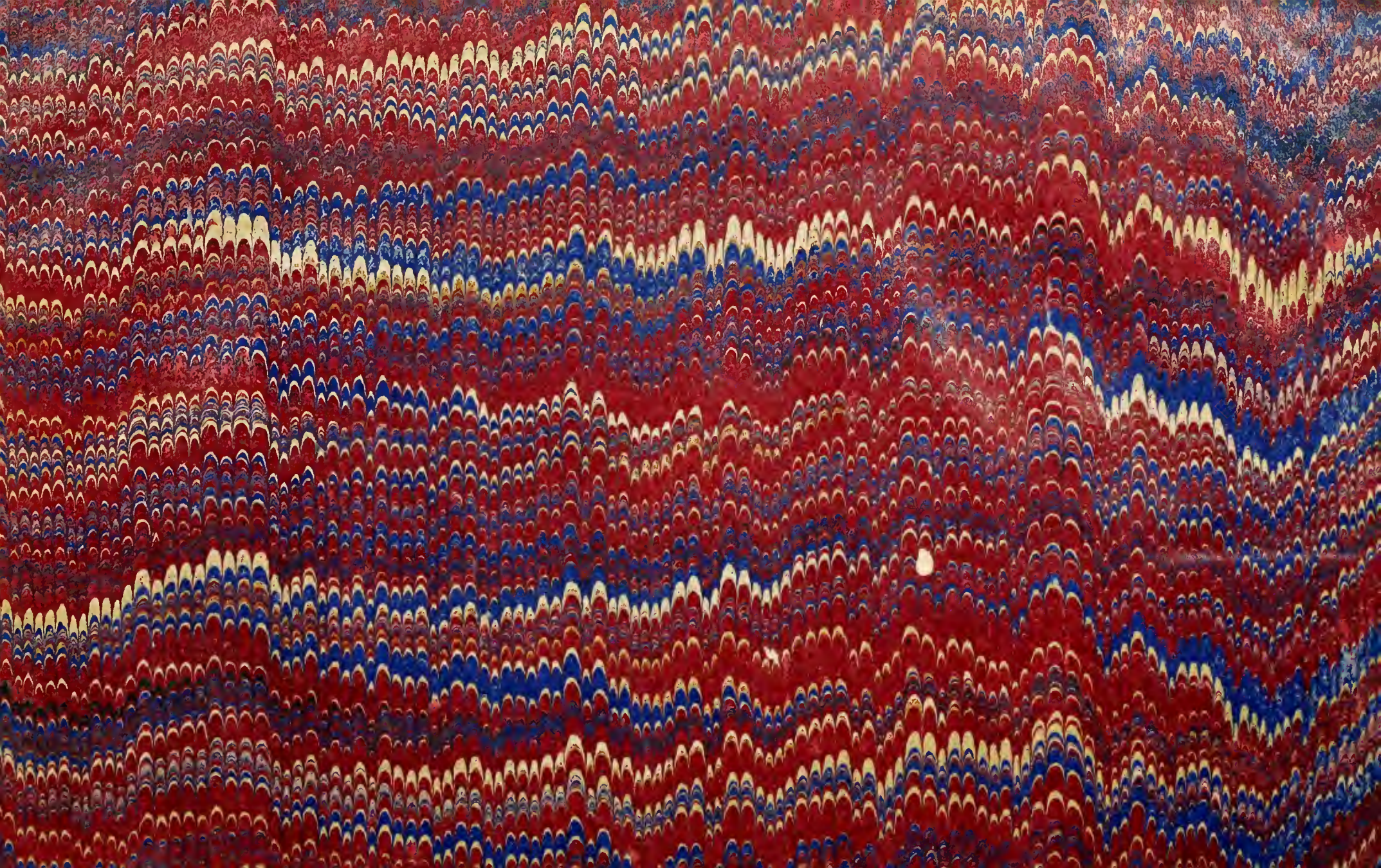

TO

# GEORGE BANCROFT,

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,

THE

# TRADUCER AND EULOGIST

OF

# GENERAL ANDREW JACKSON.

WASHINGTON.

1846.

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## TO THE PUBLIC.

It is thought best, as a suitable method of informing the people generally of the character of the present Secretary of the Navy, to republish in phamphlet form three numbers which have appeared in the *Baltimore Patriot*, addressed to that conspicious functionary. The facts asserted in those papers will be found, upon investigation, to be susceptible of the clearest proof.

WASHINGTON, *March* 12, 1846.

TO

# GEORGE BANCROFT,

*Secretary of the Navy, and "the historian of his country."*

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[No. 1.]

SIR:

An old co-laborer of yours in the Whig cause designs to address you occasionally upon sundry subjects, which may prove to be of some concernment to the public. I need not inform you who I am, further than to state that a baker's dozen of years ago you and I were members of Massachusetts whig Conventions, denouncing General Jackson and his Administration as cordially and as *ardently* as one of your present political friends, who, on a recent solemn occasion exclaimed to you in the presence of many high functionaries, "*Bancroft, you'r a d——d humbug!*" once predicted that Jackson's election to the Presidency would prove "*a curse* to the country."

Ever since the time I allude to, when we were attending Whig conventions together, I have remained a Whig: *you* have not. Do you know that I then had my doubts as to your political honesty? Do you know that I thought your terrible denunciations of the Jackson Administration were of a mechanical nature, with polished exterior but void of heart and soul, and made up and dealt forth with ulterior views? Do you know that when I some time since read your Jackson Eulogy, I thought it very prettily executed and varnished, but was forcibly reminded that it contained no more heart or soul than did your old denunciations of the same distinguished individual?

You will recollect that, not long after the promulgation of those denunciations, the cloven foot was exhibited in your vehement aspirations which you could not, or did not choose to, conceal, to get nominated for Congress by the Whig Convention of the District in which you resided! That Convention knew that you were unpopular, on account of your ridiculously assumed aristocratic manners, and that your claims to such a nomination were of "no account," and hence you were not nominated. You were deeply offended—you meditated desertion—and you gave out hints of that ilk! The *Boston Atlas* saw your bent, and without giving you time to desert, fairly lashed you out of the Whig ranks and into those of Locofocoism! In time you were made Collector of the Port of Boston—and a better party tool Van Burenism perhaps never before had found. While Collector you were appointed, by the Secretary of the Treasury, one of the Commissioners to Superintend the erection of the new Custom-house at Boston, and expressly informed you that for this service no compensation would be allowed to the Collector.

Your predecessor, Mr. Henshaw, had neither charged nor received compensation for the same service. Nevertheless after the election of Gen. Harrison to the Presidency, and the appointment of Levi Lincoln as Collector of of Boston, you claimed and finally obtained compensation as Commissioner, in addition to what you received as Collector. The books of the Treasury Department show this.

I come now, Sir, to an examination of sundry points in your course since you have been at the head of the Navy Department. Some of your newspaper friends, who seem to know pretty well when, where and whom to flatter, have been attempting to manufacture credit for you, *on the score of economy*, for having removed Gen. McNeill from the Brooklyn Establishment, whose salary was $4000. Let us see. Mr. Sanger was placed at the head of the work at a salary of $3000. But soon after this, at the earnest representations of the Van Buren, Wright and Butler clique, that a *politician* must be appointed to that station, as the only means of carrying the District, and in obedience to a visit from ex-Congressman Murphy and others, to the same purport and for the same object, did you not order Sanger off to Pensacola and appoint Mr. McAlpin, the *politician*, to the station? Did not Sanger proceed to Washington and while remaining there, was it not ascertained that McAlpin was not competent to superintend the work? Was not Sanger thereupon sent back to Brooklyn at his former salary of $3000, and McAlpin appointed his assistant at a salary of $2500? Call you this *economy*?

Another illustration of your *economy*, Sir, will be found in the manner in which your eminent *practical knowledge* has caused the steamer *Water Witch* to be operated upon. That little craft, as is well known, was built at the Washington yard, of iron, on Hunter's Plan, for a *Tank* to take water from the Dismal Swamp to national vessels going to sea, and to tow vessels from Hampton Roads up to the Navy Yard at Norfolk or elsewhere. For this last service she was found to possess adequate power, but drew too much water when fully freighted, to come out of the Canal. This, as you know, or might know, could have been easily remedied by means of a suction-pipe. But no, the Department must needs proceed on a more splendid scale of economy! Lieut. Hunter had been a little tinctured with *Tylerism!* He must be *hit*, and Capt. Loper, his rival in propellers, must be *exalted!* Thought you not so, Mr. Secretary? At all hazards, the *Water Witch* was doomed to exchange propellers! An estimate was made, and Capt. Loper thought the thing could be done for $9,000. She was sent to Philadephia, where forty feet were added to her length, and a Loper propeller put on her, at an expense of $17,000. Officers were then put on board of her, and she was ordered to Norfolk! She arrived at that port, and, as you know, the officer in command reported her *unfit for service!* The officers have been transferred to the *Phœnix*, and the *Water Witch* is *laid up!* Oh, Economy! thy personification is named George Bancroft!

Sir, shall I allude to your treatment of Dr. Brown, the Chief Clerk of the Department during the first part of your Secretaryship? You wanted another man in his place, and you knew very well how to treat so high-minded and sensitive a gentleman, as the readiest means of effecting his resignation. He did resign. Your favorite not being ready for the place, you appointed Mr. Homans Acting Chief Clerk. For this you where laughed at, as Mr. Homans was a Whig! Did you not, after ascertaining this fact, take $300 from Mr. Homans' salary, and add the same amount to that of

Mr. Ames, who had *accidentally* proclaimed publicly that "*George Bancroft was the greatest man extant*"? Did you not decline recognizing or speaking to Dr. Brown? and in reply to a civil question from him, as to the cause of the change in your bearing, did you not, in your own peculiar manner, observe that you had the right to choose your own acquaintances?) Mr. Homans has a family; Mr. Ames is a single man. I make mention of these little things because the man I address can sometimes stoop to them.

And now, Sir, I will allude to another matter. It relates to the dismissal and the appointment of a Purser in the Navy. Is there not in Washington a gentleman formerly from the West, who is an applicant for a Pursership in the Navy, and who is strongly recommended by Western gentlemen? And has not that applicant been *promised* the first vacancy that occurred in the Pursерships? And yet, have not you and your present Chief Clerk all the time been willing to set this Western applicant's claims aside, in favor of a citizen of Maine? If not, why did you inform President Polk, when you recently visited him to get the Maine gentleman appointed to the vacancy just created by the *abrupt dismissal* of Purser John N. Todd, that there was no applicant from the West for a Pursership? And why were this same Western applicant's papers *twice* displaced or put out of the way, so that the President might be deceived upon the subject? Is not the President dissatisfied about the matter? If not, why is not the new appointment officially announced?

Sir, you are in bad odor! The President is said to suspect you, and the official editor, no doubt, was more in earnest than he now pretends, when he proclaimed that you were a "humbug."

And now allow me to close this number of the series of papers which I contemplate addressing to you at my leisure, by assuring you that a Locofoco Senator of the United States recently passed through Baltimore, who does not love you by any means. To a friend, that Senator emphatically remarked, that you were not even fit to be a Schoolmaster; that you lacked veracity; that you had told him one or two *stories* a short time ago; and, finally, said he, "Sir, the Navy will suffer very much just so long as Mr. Bancroft is at the head of it. Congress can place no confidence in his projects or suggestions."

NORTHAMPTON.

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[ No. 2. ]

Sir: After considerable delay, I resume my attentions to you. I make no apology for so doing. You are a public man, at the head of one of the People's most honorable offices, and have essayed to make yourself, if not popular, at least conspicuous. I, therefore, as a freeman, claim the right to scrutinize your acts. You profess to be a modern "democrat," the friend of *economy* and *retrenchment* in the adminstration of the Government, and of equal rights and fair dealing as between man and man! As a Whig, Sir, I shall endeavor to exhibit, in very plain and direct terms, how well your acts square with your professions!

That you are learned man, if not indeed what your friend *Marcus Marton* avers that *C. C. Hazewell* called you, to wit, "*a learned monkey*," I have no disposition to deny. You have been a hard student. You have been,

and no doubt still are, ambitious to be known to the world as a great reader and an author of celebrity. For this *per se* I respect you. As much as any one, I honor the aristocracy of talent, when bent in an honest direction.

But, Sir, *have your talents* been bent in such a direction? While yet a young man, you sighed to leave the schoolastic shades which encompassed you, and to become a politician. You were a Federalist. You turned Whig. Then having become soured from what you deemed neglect, you turned towards political antimasonry! Next you became a half-and-half Abolitionist and Locofoco. And there, having obtained your reward, in the honors and emoluments of the best office in New England—*the Boston Collectorship*—you have remained, with occasional spasmodic efforts to shake off your quasi abolitionism!

You had commenced writing the history of your country. The commencement was highly creditable. What you wrote concerning the celebrated Charter of Rhode Island was conceived in wisdom and impartiality, and received the approbation of all candid readers. At the time you penned the passages, it is presumed, you saw no prospective inducements to veer from the high and honorable thoroughfare of truth. But, Sir, the tide in the affairs of "modern democracy" took a sudden turn. The infamous Dorr rebellion heaved itself up from the bottom of iniquity to its surface, and the party to which you had attached yourself made common cause with it. The friends of law and order quoted you and your history, as Locofoco authority for denouncing the rebellionists! What followed? In a new edition of your work, you qualified, explained, recanted and took back what you had honestly written, and thereby fortified yourself against all attempts to read you out of your party, for that one honest act of your life! Benjamin F. Butler, who desired so ardently the stated preaching of the gospel at Sandy Hill, changed his *official opinion*, as Attorney General of the United States, in regard to the location of the Washington terminus of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, to meet the wishes, and in compliance with the request of General Jackson. You changed your *history* of the Rhode Island Charter to conform to the progressive views of the advocates of Dorrism!

Sir, you were, by a curious combination of circumstances, made Secretary of the American Navy! And how, in that capacity, have you demeaned yourself! You had heard, unquestionably, that there were abuses in that right-arm of the national defence, and far be it from me to denounce an honest ambition to obtain public *eclat* by attempts to correct those abuses!

But, Sir, how and by whom should such a step be taken? Modestly, by one who had first made himself a complete master of the defects in and the wants of the Navy? Or abruptly, by a verdant gentleman fresh from his books, with but a limited knowledge of human nature, and the most superficial acquaintance imaginable with the true character of that Navy? Should love of *Patriotism* or hatred of *Tylerism* govern a Secretary in matters of so grave a nature?

Sir, I shall take the liberty to allude in this communication, as I alluded in the former one which it gave me pleasure to address to you, to some of your *little acts*, by way of burnishers to your character "in the abstract." You cannot have forgotten one of the first acts you performed on assuming the high responsibilities of your present station. You found a portrait of *John Tyler* hanging up in the Secretary's Room of the Navy

Department. You ordered the Messenger to take it out, and to put Mr. Van Buren's in its place. This was done. The splenetic and *ungrateful* act—though Heaven knows John Tyler deserved the treatment he received, but not at the hands of James K. Polk and those whom his election exalted—got into the newspapers. Mr. Ritchie, of the "Union," called to see you on the subject and to gather materials for a contradiction of the statement! Sir, did you not take the innocent old gentleman into the room of your chief clerk, and, pointing to Tyler's picture, say "there, you see *I had it hung up in the most conspicuous place here*, where there was another picture of Mr. Tyler already! Instead of one portrait, here are two of him!" And is it not the *truth* that you never ordered, or directed, Mr. Tyler's portrait that hung in your room to be placed in that of the chief clerk? Is it not *true* that Mr. Brown, who was then the chief clerk, seeing the said portrait turned down in the ante-room, where the Messenger had placed it, took the picture, *of his own volition*, and hung it up in the room which he occupied?

Sir, truth is an element which will bear the man onward and upward who implicitly stands by it. A resort to falsehood, direct or implied—there being no essential difference between the *suggestio falsi* and the *suppressio veri*—loses to any man the confidence of his fellow men. Mr. Ritchie, on a subsequent, solemn occasion—or which was designed and planned to be solemn—and when his air, manner and words contrasted shockingly with the put-on habiliments of mourning all about him, gave you, as you remember, that characteristic salutation, "*Ah, Bancroft, you'r a d——d humbug!*" He may have meant more than his words, at the moment, seemed to imply. You *had humbugged* him about Tyler's picture, and caused him to parade in his paper a denial of a charge that was true—and you knew it!

Sir, what next did you do to distinguish yourself as a Secretary of the Navy? You had doubtless heard and read of severities in the service, of abuses, and of suggestions of reform, and no doubt conceived the idea of at once exalting yourself in the annals of fame by a grand attempt to correct those abuses and at the same time to make a display of your newly acquired power!

Luckily, or *otherwise*, the case of Capt. Voorhees presented itself. A Norfolk paper, of your politics, harped severely upon it. The *United States Journal*, then your eulogist, did the same. A son of Francis P. Blair, who was an officer on board of the *Congress*, had an interview with you, either by your seeking or his own, and denounced Capt. Voorhees, his commanding officer, in unmeasured terms. You ordered that the Captain should be tried by a Court Martial. You named the officers to compose the Court. The occasion enabled you to give a very lucrative business and some prominence to Benj. F. Hallett, of Boston, a turncoat political adventurer, like yourself, who was balancing between the two factions of your party in Massachusetts and coveted at the time by both, which no doubt resulted in binding him most firmly to your fortunes—until he can do better by attaching himself to some one else! You appointed him Judge Advocate.

The law requires the Department, when it directs an officer to be court-martialed, to make out all the charges and specifications it has against him, and furnish him with a copy of the same. Sir, what was your conduct in this whole business? You had Capt. Voorhees tried—and the trial was

a long one—upon charges preferred against him for his conduct in the river La Plata, in disavowing the blockade of Montevideo which Commodore Turner, who commanded the squadron to which the Congress belonged, had recognized. While this trial was going on, did you not send for young Blair, or go to him, knowing that he was vindictive towards Capt. Voorhees, and obtain from him information with a view to have your victim tried by a *second* Court Martial, which would greatly protract Mr. Hallett's lucrative employment as Judge Advocate, and not materially *economise* the public expenditures!

Did you not, while the first court martial was going on, and feeling, for the time, that to try a man *twice* in this manner would not be *law* but *persecution*, apply to Mr. Hallett to ask Capt. Voorhees' consent to be tried upon some charges, in relation to taking the *Congress* to Annapolis before repairing to Norfolk, which you knew that Commodores Stewart and Ridgely, on the first court, would have thrown out if offered?

Did you not order a *second* Court Martial, leaving out Commodores Stewart and Ridgely, and naming Commodore Downes as its President, to try Captain Voorhees upon charges within your knowledge before the first court was held? And why, after you had testified under oath before the second court, as to the time of your knowledge of the various charges against the accused, and Mr. Blair was called upon to state at *what time* he held a particular conversation with you relative to Capt. Voorhees' conduct, *why* did the Judge Advocate *of your appointing* so pertinaciously object to the interrogatory and ask if it had been put to elicit from the witness's testimony a contradiction of that which you had previously given? There was something in this matter that looked squally for your reputation. It looked as if the Judge Advocate, out of good will for the man who had given him the place he filled, and the court, out of respect for the head of the Navy, felt bound to screen you!

Well, sir, the *second* Court Martial at length got through with its arduous labors, and its judgment was, that Capt. Philip F. Voorhees "*be suspended for the term of eighteen months.*" The gallant Captain had now been tried a *second* time, to suit the arbitrary and illegal *direction* of the Department. He had been tried by his peers who had carefully examined, during the twenty days the Court was in session, all the charges against him and all the evidence in the case. The verdict was deliberately made up and rendered upon the high honors of the officers who composed the court. Severe as it was, for the trifling, insignificant, trumped-up charges against the accused, it should have been final. But you *willed* that it should be otherwise. Like your ancient prototype as drawn by Shakspeare, in the Merchant of Venice, you exclaimed, "*I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!*" You complained of the sentence of the court—a court of your own selection, with a President named by yourself and known to be opposed to the accused—and declared that the punishment, awarded to Captain Voorhees by his peers, by old and experienced officers of the Navy who *ought* to know the laws and discipline in relation thereto, was "inadequate."

Yes, Sir, you, a mere stripling in knowledge of the naval service, just from your books, and but three months in the Department, had the unblushing presumption to *dictate* to such officers in the Navy as Downes, Cas-

SIN, BALLARD, KEARNEY, STORER, GEISINGER, MCCAULEY, STRINGHAM and FORREST in the matter of trying and sentencing by Court Martial a Captain in the Navy! One is amazed at your audacity! Nor does any thing short of amazement follow the painful intelligence, that the Court, instead of proudly rebuking your unequalled presumption and condemning your illegal and unprecedented persecution of a gallant officer for a trifling error of judgment, obediently followed your dictation! I say this of that "Court of Honor" in sorrow. You ordered the court to re-assemble, not at Coleman's, in Washington, where it and the former Court had been held, but on board the *North Carolina*, at New York, for the purpose of *revising its decision.* It did re-assemble, and, without passing a shade of rebuke upon the arrogance of power, that would make said Court eat its own decision, it recalled its former sentence, which so much displeased you, Sir, and then sentenced Captain Voorhees "*to be dismissed from the Navy of the United States.*" As a sort of salvo, the Court recommended the accused to the mitigating power of the Executive, on account of his past valuable services to his country, and his integrity of character—and the President thereupon changed the sentence to *suspension of duty, without pay or emolument, for five years!*

Sir, when before has there occurred such a disgraceful and scandalous proceeding? If this concentration and aggrandisement of power in the Executive of the Nation, in the President and Heads of Department, is to go on, what will our boasted freedom from tyranny be worth! Is this a specimen of your vaunted "*democracy*," Sir, that allows a Head of Department to select a Court Marshal to try an officer; and then, if the verdict does not happen to suit that self-sufficient Head of Department, to order the finding of one that will? Why go through the solemn mockery of a Court Martial, at all, if the judgment of the Head of Department that convenes it, and not that of the Court, is to be finally rendered?

But to its honor and justice be it spoken, this state of things does not exist in the Military Department of the Government. Allow me to direct your attention Sir, to the case of Lieut. Don Carlos Buell, of the 3d Infantry. [Senate Documents, 28th Con. 1st session, 2 vol.] Mr. Buell was tried by a Court Martial at Jefferson Barracks, in June, 1843, upon a charge of *unofficerlike conduct*, in striking a Private with a sword, was found *not guilty* and *honorably acquitted.* This decision did not meet the wishes of the Commanding General, who ordered the Court to re-assemble for the purpose of reconsidering its decision, and to show upon what authority of *law* or *orders* it justified the accused in *taking from the guard house and striking with his sword a soldier!* The Court did re-assemble, and after a careful re-examination of its proceedings adhered to its former decision. In its defence it said, that the Rules and Articles of War no where gave authority to *any officer* to demand from a Court Martial reasons for its decisions, still less to *dictate* what its decisions "must be," in any case. The defence continues: "In the remarks with which the case of Lieutenant Buell is returned for reconsideration to the Court, the Court is required, first, to state the grounds of its decision; and, secondly, it is informed that 'it must be the duty of the Court' to pronounce a different one. Such a course seems clearly at variance with the whole intent and meaning of Article 72d, above referred to; (requiring the youngest officer of the Court to give his vote first, to protect Courts Martial against the influence of rank

and to secure decisions unbiassed by the fear of displeasing superiors in authority) and, indeed, to destroy the very existence of the Court as an independent tribunal, acting under the sacred responsibility of an oath."

Strong attempts were made by the Commanding General to induce this Court to revise and change its sentence—but without success. The blandishments of power and the fear of displeasing superiors in authority, combined, had no effect upon the officers composing the Court, who felt that they had done their duty under the sanctity of an oath!

Sir, this number of the series of papers I design addressing to you is longer than I intended it to be. In my next, I shall refer to sundry statements in your Report recently transmitted to Congress, which are not true, and therefore calculated, if not designed, to mislead the publice mind. I shall also refer to your wholesale crusade against the old fighting Commodores, who are yet hale and able-bodied, the Pursers, and officers of the Marine Corps, and perhaps hint at some of the reasons which have impelled you to assume such a position towards them. The manner, and for what service, you have retained, or salaried, certain clerks in the Navy Department, and dismissed certain other clerks, as well as sundry operations in the matter of contracts, will be duly noticed. Meantime *a votre santé.*

NORTHAMPTON.

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[ No. 3. ]

Sir: My inclination prompts and my leisure permits me to again address you. And in the outset of this number you must consent to be once more reminded of the time when you, as a rabid Whig, denounced the Administration of Andrew Jackson in stronger terms, perhaps, than I use in denouncing the head of one of the Departments of the present Administration. These old reminiscences may ruffle your equanimity of temper a little, but what of it? They will serve to show others what you *have been!* It is said that your friend, President Polk, when a candidate on the stump for Governor of Tennessee, used to take great delight in exhibiting to his audience a bundle of papers, and exclaiming as he would open them and look with a terrible *grin* at his competitor, "*Old documents are dangerous things!*"

Sir, in an old document called the "Northampton Courier" and dated in October, 1832, you may find an account of the proceedings of a Whig County Convention at Northampton, Massachusetts, at which you and others where appointed delegates to attend the Whig State Convention which was held at Worcester the 11th of October, 1832. The following is an extract from that old document! After giving an account of the first proceedings of the Convention, the paper says:

"Judge Newcomb, the Hon. Isaac C. Bates, and George Bancroft, Esq., gave eloquent and dignified expositions of *the rotteness and corruption* of the present (Jackson's) Administration, and of the importance of *inviolate laws and the pure administration of government.*"

You attended the State Convention aforesaid as a Whig delegate, and was placed on a Committee to draft an Address to the Whigs of Massachusetts. The Address was drafted, receiving the unanimous sanction of the Committee and of the Convention. A copy of that Address lies before me.

It is a very able and a very bitter paper against the then existing Administration. *Who* drew it up? Will you be kind enough, Sir, to lay your hand upon your heart and in *sincerity* exclaim, "Thou cans't not say *I* did it!" If you did not actually draw up the Address, you assented to it—you gave it your approbation!

Sir, I have before me your recent Report upon the condition and affairs of the Navy. It is an off-hand paper; off-hand in style—off-hand in statements, whether true or untrue—off-hand in schemes—and off-hand in presumption, in the matter of promoting young officers, who may have "friends at court," or may be political favorites, over the heads of older ones, and of placing the gallant old Commodores, who "have done the State some service," and who are yet hale and vigorous, upon half-pay!

Let you have your way, Sir, in advancing what you style "merit" over "seniority," and how many officers would find promotion who were not ascertained to be ultra politicians—Locofocos—brawling friends of the Administration? Is it not enough that the civil offices of *the whole people* should all be given to men of *your party*, but you must carry your Jacobin principles so far as to lug the officers of the Army and Navy into the same miserable condition? Are you not satisfied with the control of that power which manages to give almost all new appointments in the Navy to political partisans, friends or relatives, but you must seek to break down the rule that respects "seniority," in the matter of promotions, so that you may place those whose *political* "merit" you may admire, or whose friends you wish to serve, over the heads of older officers, no matter how high their "merit," who may have the misfortune to be without "friends at court," or worse than that, to be Whigs in sentiment!

Sir, if your recommendation were to obtain, what hope of promotion would ever glow in and animate the bosom of an officer, known to entertain Whig predelictions? To what a miserable state of sycophancy—*abject sycophancy and toadyism*—would such a doctrine lead! Are you not already nauseated with the *manufactured* bows, smiles, smirks and praises that constantly salute your eyes and ears from those who are hunting civil offices as rewards for partisan services? Or, upon the principle that "like begets like," do you esteem a practice which you have observed towards others, in days gone by, commendable in those who now, for a similar object, observe it towards you? Is your love for the "system" so strong, on account of your success in practising it, that you must needs make an effort to introduce it into the Navy? Heaven protect the meritorious, independent and high-minded officer, who has "no friends at court," when such an iniquitous system shall be introduced into the service!

But, Sir, another branch of your falsely styled *reform* in the naval service, scarcely less reprehensible than the one just alluded to, is the proposition to put the oldest officers, those whom you style Commodores—though our Republican laws confer upon them no such title—upon furlough, or half pay? And you propose this—propose to cut down the salaries of such gallant old officers as STEWART, DOWNS, WARRINGTON, JONES, MORRIS, CRANE, RIDGELY, BALLARD, SHUBRICK, and the like—as a grand step in *economy*? And while saving in this way a few thousands, how large a sum would you squander upon *favorites* as agents or contractors, in matters relating to live oak timber, water rotted hemp, Loper's steam propellers, &c., &c.!

Sir, the services of those old officers, whom *you* would put upon half-pay,

are dear to the American people. The services they rendered in every battle they were engaged in, during the last war, to say nothing of what they may do in wars that may yet come upon us, could not be computed in dollars and cents. What would be their full salaries, were they to live to be a century old, in comparison with their glorious services at a time when their country needed such brave and gallant spirits? And you, Sir, who never saw a battle on ocean or on land, and probably never will see one, would *coin* those services by way of saving the half of the salaries of the noble old officers who rendered them! What sort of patriotism, of national pride and generosity does such cold, calculating, niggardly conduct exhibit? No wonder you are exceedingly unpopular with all brave and generous-minded officers in the Navy!

Sir, the man who attempts to play the demagogue before the people, or any particular section of the people, *may* bring exposure and ridicule upon himself, if he fails to act his part adroitly. You gave place in your report to the highly important fact that you had appointed Captain Rousseau—"the first Captain ever selected from west of the Alleghany Mountains" for the same service—to the command of a squadron! This announcement, coming before the nation in an annual report from the Secretary of the Navy for the information of Congress, tells on its face the reason why it was made. You desired to gain credit with the rising people of the mighty West! But, Sir, have you not attempted to deceive them? Why did you not inform them that there are but *two* Captains in the Navy from west of the Alleghany Mountains—ROUSSEAU and ARMSTRONG—and that the latter *had* had the command of a squadron in the Pacific, having succeeded to it on the death of Commodore DALLAS! You will find "honesty the best policy" even in making up an annual report. Yes, Sir, and TRUTH also should not be lost sight of, if you would have your report a reliable one! In your attack on the Marine Corps, in the report referred to, do you not state that "of *thirteen* Captains, but *one* is at sea; and of *forty* Lieutenants, about *seven* are at sea!" Sir, do you not know that there were at the time *two* Captains and *nineteen* Lieutenants of this Corps at sea? Why this attack upon, and why these misstatements in relation to, the Marine Corps? I ask, Sir, is there no personal feeling in the matter? Has not one of the field officers of the corps crossed your path in the way of some dismissal or appointment?

Sir, you attack the Pursers in the Navy: allow me to ask if the attack does not grow out of the personal difficulty you have had with Pursers Buchanan and Todd? What was your conduct towards the former gentleman? Was it respectful? Was it commendable? A jury of his countrymen, at Philadelphia, passed upon his case and allowed him the amount that he had justly claimed. Did this satisfy you? No! it gave you as little pleasure as did the *first* verdict of the *second* Court Martial which you ordered to try Captain Voorhees! And what was your bearing towards Purser Buchanan after the jury in question had rendered a verdict in his favor? Was it gentlemanly or otherwise when you coarsely and rudely informed him that you would take the case up to the Supreme Court?

Sir, I will approve of your every laudible endeavor to reform whatever abuses there may exist in the corps of Pursers; but the work must be done in at least a tolorably decent manner. Petulence, instability and *tomfoolery* must constitute no part of the operation. Did you not, in October last, peremptorily direct a Purser to have his accounts made out within sixty days,

and after he had by great industry complied with the mandate and called on you to direct that the Auditor (who had refused to attend to the matter until next Spring) should audit the same, did you not say to him in a petulent, nervous manner, and a sort of cockney, devil-may-care style, "*Oh I can't be bothered in this way: I have no control over the Auditor: apply to the Secretary of the Treasury?*" And is it out of such materials as these, Sir, that you bring before Congress the charge of delay against the Pursers in the Navy, in the matter of settling their accounts?

Sir, let me draw your attention to some of your arrangements of the clerkships in the Navy Department. And to begin, let me ask if you have not for months allowed a person to draw a salary of $100 per month out of the public treasury for services *wholly* rendered in copying your history, or attending to your private matters?

What was your course of conduct towards Mr. McBlair, who had been but a short time a clerk, in Commodore Crane's Bureau, in the Navy Department? He was a faithful clerk, with a family to provide for, and Commodore Crane was attached to him, and desired that he should be retained in office. But what cared you for the clerk's faithfulness or the wishes of Commodore Crane in regard to him? You wanted his place for a partizan friend, and therefore you directed your Chief Clerk to dismiss him, because he entertained Whig predeliction! The Chief Clerk did as he was directed, and dismissed Mr. McBlair the 31st July last. Mr. McBlair directly sought an interview with you, and at last obtained it at your private dwelling. In that interview you treated him with such a degree of boorishness and incivility, ejaculating every now and then, while he was respectfully laying his case before you, "*Oh I dont want to continue this conversation,*" that he felt compelled to rebuke such "insolence of office" by warning you that *a day of retribution would come!* What step, Sir, did you thereupon take? The next day you addressed the following official note to Commodore Crane:

"NAVY DEPARTMENT, *August* 1, 1845.

SIR:—The conduct of Mr. McBlair, a clerk in your Bureau, was yesterday of so outrageous a character that I am compelled to direct you to dismiss him from the service of the Department.

Respectfully yours,

GEORGE BANCROFT."

Now, Sir, TRUTH is a jewel even in a modern Secretary of the Navy. When you penned this note to Commodore Crane, you *knew* that you had, the day previous to the conduct of Mr. McBlair to which it refers, directed your Chief Clerk to dismiss him, which duty he performed! You *knew* that Mr. McBlair's "outrageous conduct," which so much offended your official dignity, was the *effect* of his dismissal, followed by your supercilious manner at the interview referred to, and not the *cause* of that dismissal! Why then did you attempt, by a manufactured statement void of truth, to impose upon the honest and confiding Commodore? The act was a mean one.

Sir, what was your conduct in relation to Mr. Ludlow, a clerk in Commodore Shubrick's Bureau? On the 20th of June you appointed Mr. Ludlow to a permanent clerkship, and forty days thereafter you removed him—because he entertained Whig predelictions! And when Commodore Shubrick, incensed at such trifling conduct requested of you the reasons for the

removal of Mr. Ludlow, did you not inform him that it was the President's and not your work? Sir, the President declares that he does *not* interfere at all in the matter of removing or appointing clerks in the Departments. By your answer to Commodore Shubrick's inquiry, you raise a question of veracity between yourself and the President. Let those settle it who can!

One more case, Sir. It is that of Mr. Randall who was a Messenger, with your pledge that he should in a short time have a clerkship, in the Navy Department, as he was a man of respectable ability and character. Instead of promoting him, in compliance with your promise, you preferred ordering him, rather than one of the negro men within your call, to go to a stable and saddle and bridle a horse for you to ride! He felt the insult, and resigned his place.

Another evidence of your love for Tylerism may as well be here recorded. Messrs. Dove and Coburn contracted with your worthy predecessor, Judge Mason, to build a wall around the new Depot of Charts, or Observatory. Owing to some change, subsequently made in the grade of the street, extra work had to be done by the contractors. Judge Mason gave them an order to do it, with the understanding that said extra work should be paid for at such valuation as disinterested persons might place upon it. You, Sir, succeeded Judge Mason, and visited the work in question in the full panoply of your official dignity. After examining it cursorily did you not with an exquisite's sneer and simper say, to Mr. Dove, "*This is some of Tyler's patronage! it must be stopped!*" Mr. Dove refused to stop the work, unless you gave him a written order to do so—which order you gave, and the work was stopped accordingly. But the new Secretary of the Navy, an old hand at turning summersets, soon found occasion to wheel to the right-about—in the way of exhibiting his power and showing Patch's maxim illustrated, "that some things *can* be done as well as others"—and to offer the sum of $5940 to the contractors to resume and finish the work! Did they not accede to the offer, on condition that they should not again be stopped? Did they not commence, and were they not again stopped by your order, and kept some twenty days doing nothing, with stone masons at $2 per day each on their hands? Did you not, after the lapse of weeks, again change your mind, and direct the contractors to go on and finish the work? And after it was finished, and the Government charged with the lost time which you caused, so that the bill amounted to about $8000, did you not refuse to pay one dime over the $5940 which you agreed to give, and let the contractors go on without interruption and finish the work? By this master-stroke of *economy*, no doubt you flatter yourself that you have *saved* the Government the amount which Mr. Dove felt that he would be obliged to raise, by mortgaging his property, in order to pay his workmen!

Sir, a friend has sent to me a copy of the *Boston Courier*, a pretended Whig journal, the editor of which has seen fit to make use of some pretty strong language against the writer of these numbers, for "pouring out columns of wrath" upon your head, and to defend your "literary reputation," which he says is dear to him, "and should be dear to every American." This writer himself happens to have known something of the editor of the *Boston Courier* in years by-gone. I remember the time when he published the *Boston Galaxy*, and was prosecuted for a libel upon the Rev. John Newland Maffitt, *and convicted!* I think your modern friend, Benjamin F. Hallett, (who, if he cannot obtain the Boston Custom House, may be willing to succeed

Com. Shubrick as the head of one of the Bureaus in your Department,) helped conduct the prosecution. I remember the time when the same editor, professing to belong to the National Republican party in Massachusetts, took great delight, in the campaign of 1824, in crying down the prospects of Mr. Adams and taunting that gentleman's friends with intimations that General Jackson would be elected! I remember the time, in 1831-2-3, when he constantly interfered in the Congressional election in the Essex North District of Massachusetts, and opposed the Hon. Caleb Cushing, who belonged to his own party, with a rancor and venom unparalleled in the annals of party warfare, *until* Mr. Cushing declined being longer a candidate, and, under his own signature, in the *Newburyport Herald*, gave the editor of the Courier a series of the severest epistolary lashings, perhaps, that were ever inflicted upon the conductor of a newspaper! And I remember, too, the *effect* of those lashings! I remember that from that time forward the editor of the *Courier* had nothing but praise and adulation in his paper about Caleb Cushing! I remember when the same editor, two or three years back, professing to be a Whig, did all that he could to induce a very distinguished statesman to go off from the Whigs, with as many of the party as would follow, in favor of commercial treaties of reciprocity, and other Tylerian experiments. That great statesman, however, was too wise to take the leap! But I do *not* remember when the editor of the *Boston Courier* ever rendered service to the political party to which he professed to belong! *Do you, Sir?* I am willing that you should have the benefit of *such* a champion's defence! He admits your political short-comings, but contends that you were obliged to change, in your history, what you had written in favor of the Rhode Island Charter, in order to prevent "a gross perversion of historical and well-known fact." His logic in the matter is beneath notice, and I pass it by.

Sir, I am not conscious of having assailed your "literary reputation." I believe I admitted your scholarship—that you were emphatically "a man of books," and I gave you credit for the honorable and praiseworthy manner in which you commenced so laborious and responsible a work as that of your history of the United States. But if I now present a specimen of your *paucity of ideas*, you may thank for it, the champion of your "literary reputation" who edits the *Boston Courier!*

At the close of the 3d volume of your "history" you introduce the early career of WASHINGTON as follows. Speaking of the Treaty of Peace between England and France at Aix la Chappelle, you say:

"At the very time of the Congress of Aix la Chappelle, the woods of Virginia sheltered the youthful George Washington, the son of a widow, born by the side of the Potomac, beneath the roof of a Westmoreland farmer, almost from infancy his lot had been the lot of an orphan. No academy had welcomed him to its shades, no college crowned him with its honors; to read, to write, to cipher—these had been his degrees in knowledge.

And now, at sixteen years of age, in quest of an honest maintenance, encountering intolerable toil,—cheered onward by being able to write to a school-boy friend, 'Dear Richard, a doubloon is my constant gain every day and sometimes six pistoles,' 'himself his own cook, having no spit but a forked stick, no plate but a large chip,' roaming over spurs of the Alleghanies and along the banks of the Shenandoah; alive to nature, and sometimes 'spending the best of the day in admiring the trees and the richness

of the land among skin-clad savages with their scalps and rattles, or uncouth emigrants 'that would never speak English' rarely sleeping in a bed; holding a bearskin a splendid couch; glad of a resting place for the night upon a little hay, straw or fodder, and often camping in the forests, where the place nearest the fire was a happy luxury;—this stripling surveyor in the woods, with no companion but his unlettered associates, and no implements of science but his compass and chain, contrasted strangely with the imperial magnificence of the Congress of Aix la Chappelle. And yet God had selected, not Kaunitz, nor Newcastle, not a monarch of the House of Hapsburg, nor of Hanover, but the Virginia stripling, to give an impulse to human affairs, and as far as events can depend on an individual, had placed the rights and the destinies of countless millions in the keeping of the widow's son."

This is all very prettily said, Sir. It is full of such poetical garnishing as an experienced prose writer,—never designed for a poet, could put together, *by an effort*, with such a noble theme as that of the early career of the great and good WASHINGTON, in connection with the stirring times of that memorable period in the history of nations! But, Sir, after the same style and fashion, in your Oration, delivered in Washington, the 27th of June last, you described the early career of JACKSON. I copy from that Oration as follows:

"South Carolina gave a birth-place to Andrew Jackson. On its remote frontier, far up on the forest-clad banks of the Catawba, in a region where the settlers were just beginning to cluster, his eye first saw the light. There his infancy sported in the ancient forests, and his mind was nursed to freedom by their influence. He was the youngest son of an Irish emigrant, of Scottish origin, who, two years after the great war of Frederic of Prussia, fled to America for relief from indigence and oppression. His birth was in 1767, at a time when the people of our land were but a body of dependent colonists, scarcely more than two millions in number, scattered along an immense coast, with no army, or navy, or union; and exposed to the attempts of England to control America by the aid of military force. His boyhood grew up in the midst of the contest with Great Britain. The first great political truth that reached his heart, was that all men are free and equal; the first great fact that beamed on his understanding, was his country's independence.

"The strife, as it increased, came near the shades of his own upland residence. As a boy of thirteen, he witnessed the scenes of horror that accompany civil war; and when but a year older, with an elder brother, he shouldered his musket, and went forth to strike a blow for his country."

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"Behold, then, our orphan hero, sternly earnest, consecrated to humanity from childhood by sorrow, having neither father, nor mother, nor sister, nor surviving brother, so young and yet so solitary, and therefore bound the more closely to collective man—behold him elect for his lot to go forth and assist in laying the foundations of society in the great valley of the Mississippi.

"At the very time when Washington was pledging his own and future generations to the support of the popular institutions which were to be the light of the human race—at the time when the institutions of the Old World were rocking to their centre, and the mighty fabric that had come down from the middle ages was falling in—the adventurous Jackson, in the radiant glory and boundless hope and confident intrepidity of twenty-one, plunged into

the wilderness, crossed the great mountain-barrier that divides the western waters from the Atlantic, followed the paths of the early hunters and fugitives, and, not content with the nearer neighborhood to his parent State, went still further and further to the west, till he found his home in the most beautiful region on the Cumberland. There, from the first, he was recognised as the great pioneer: under his courage, the coming emigrants were sure to find a shield."

Sir, where two subjects of eulogy were so essentially unlike each other, it is difficult to perceive how a man of real genius, addicted at all to original thought, could consent to have a sameness of description, of metaphor, and of deduction, run through all that he laboriously had written of both! I doubt not, if you were to write an enconium upon Mr. POLK, it would be very much in the same strain, with musical variations, as those I have extracted.

Sir, I once knew a fiddler who could play but one tune, with variations. He played that one, however, very prettily. It sounded well, the first time. The fiddler was a very dandyfied, self-conceited person and seemed to believe that he could play any thing in the department of music, for when asked if he could play some tune the interrogator would name, he would reply "oh, certainly," and strike off into the "Soldier's Joy," with variations, that everlasting tune, which he alone could play.

Submitting the fiddler's case for your study when you next indite an eulogy, Sir, I close this paper with a recommendation in a language with which you are familiar: *Sapientem pascere barbam.*

NORTHAMPTON.

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